

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MAPUTO 00326 201913Z

ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-08 /019 W
-----063703 202020Z /50

R 201100Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6805

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, BAGB, MZ

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT--VISIT OF CASTLE COOKE REPRESENTATIVE

REF: STATE 27532

1. SUMMARY: CASTLE AND COOKE FOREIGN AFFAIRS CONSULTANT WILLIAM B. HUSSEY MET WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTRIES DURING ONE DAY VISIT TO MAPUTO. HE PROPOSED TO THEM IN BROAD OUTLINE CASTLE AND COOKE'S INTEREST IN CULTIVATION OF ABOUT 10,000 ACRES OF BANANAS, EMPLOYING 7000 PEOPLE WITH A GOAL OF EXPORTING 200,000 TONS OF BANANAS ANNUALLY TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE. RESPONSE WAS POSITIVE
END SUMMARY,

2. BOTH JOAO MOSCA, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ANTONIO BRANCO, SECRETARY GENERAL (NUMBER TWO) IN THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, REPEATED TO HUSSEY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE IS ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN BANANA JOINT VENTURE WITH AN AMERICAN FIRM. MOSCA SAID THAT THE GPRM HAD IN MIND THREE SMALL PRODUCTIONS UNITS OUTSIDE THE CITIES OF MAPUTO BEIRA AND NAMPULA FOR DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND A LARGE PLANTATION AT A LOCATION PICKED BY CASTLE AND COOKE FOR EXPORT. BUT HE URGED HUSSEY TO HAVE CASTLE AND COOKE MAKE A PROPOSAL OF THEIR OWN DESIGN MOSCA'S BUREAU HAD PREPARED DETAILED BACKGROUND DATA. INCLUDING SOIL SURVEYS MAPS, AND PUBLISHED MATERIALS WHICH HE GAVE
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TO HUSSEY. ALTHOUGH MOZAMBIQUE HAD GROWN BANANAS FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION AND EXPORT TO SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD, MOSCA SAID EXISTING BANANA ESTATES WERE ABANDONES AND POORLY LOCATED. HE RECOMMENDED STARTING FROM SCRATCH.

3. BRANCO, WHO SAID HE WAS SPEAKING FOR MINISTER MARIO MACHUNGO,

WHO WAS UNABLE TO MEET WITH HUSSEY, SAID THAT DECREE LAW 18:77 FORMS THE BASIS ON WHICH MOZAMBIQUE CONSIDERS FOREIGN INVESTMENT BUT THAT SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS WOULD FOLLOW ON THE BEST FORM FOR A JOINT VENTURE WHENEVER CASTLE AND COOKE IS READY WITH A PROPOSAL.

4. HUSSEY URGED MOZAMBIQUE TO JOIN LOME CONVENTION SO BANANAS COULD BE MARKETING MORE CHEAPLY IN EUROPE. BRANCO SAID THAT HIS MINISTRY MADE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING MINISTRY ON MEMBERSHIP IN THE LOME CONVENTION, BUT THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED. BRANCO SAID MOZAMBIQUE WAS CONSULTING WITH "MEMBERS AND NON MEMBERS" ON THE PROS AND CONS OF JOINING.

5. HUSSEY SAID THAT IF CASTLE AND COOKE FINDS THE CLIMATIC SOIL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS WARRANT FURTHER INTEREST IN MOZAMBIQUE, HE WOULD RETURN WITH A TEAM OF EXPERTS TO DO MORE DETAILED WORK. BOTH MOSCA AND BRANCO URGED HIM TO COME BACK SOON.

6. COMMENT: THE GPRM WAS WELL PREPARED FOR HUSSEY'S VISIT AND COORDINATED A POSITIVE AND FLEXIBLE RESPONSE. THEY SEEMED PLEASED WITH THE GENERAL PROPOSAL HUSSEY MADE. BECAUSE OF HUSSEY'S TWICE POSTPONED ARRIVAL AND UNEXPECTED URGENT RETURN TO THE US FOR PERSONAL REASONS MEETINGS WERE RUSHED. HOWEVER, GPRM IMPRESSED EMBOFF WITH SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR INTEREST AND WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER WHATEVER TERMS AMERICAN FIRMS WISHED TO PROPOSE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MAPUTO00326
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780123-0125
Format: TEL
From: MAPUTO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780347/aaaabnyz.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4749f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 27532
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3269581
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR PROJECT--VISIT OF CASTLE COOKE REPRESENTATIVE
TAGS: BENC, BAGB, MZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4749f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014